

Belle Plaine  
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Community Solutions

## Bringing tourists and residents to Belle Plaine

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Union editor

The process of making Belle Plaine a destination for tourists and potential residents continues as the Community Solutions Committee of the Belle Plaine Economic Development Commission holds monthly meetings.

The group, now numbering over 30 local residents, have been meeting with Kent and Anne Zimmerman of the TZC consulting firm. The broad goal of the group is to identify strengths and weaknesses of life in Belle Plaine and find ways of improvement.

During the May meeting, group members were asked to define "success," to suggest strategic actions for succeeding and to indicate their general areas of interest so that they might be assigned to an action team.

Earlier this month, the committee

heard a report from Bill Daily and Hank Wehrman on a meeting of the Iowa Great Places movement they attended in Cedar Rapids. They indicated that Belle Plaine might be a good candidate for the program in the future.

The large group then divided into the action teams. They are exploring different aspects of community life, including: downtown and neighborhoods, public institutions and infrastructure, tourism, recreation and culture, business development

and resource development, collaboration and stewardship.

Each of the groups was asked to consider a primary goal for the group, a strategic area of focus to achieve the goal in 2005 and a second strategic goal to achieve this year. The groups were then asked to take several action steps and to report on these by the July meeting.

The goals of the action teams include further making the central business dis-

trict an attractive place to visit, work on packaging a proposal for a recreational center/aquatic center for an eventual bond issue, package and promote Belle Plaine for weekend visitors, communicate with local business owners to determine how their business could be enhanced and grow and investigate the notion of entrepreneurial development of new homegrown business and investigate the feasibility of hiring a professional to coordinate community groups and activities.

In the future, the group will review the action steps completed, will hear from guest speakers on community improvement and may make trips to other Iowa cities that have been successful in community development.

The group's next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 13, 7 p.m. at the Belle Plaine Community Center.